

Message Text

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TO USDEL MBFR VIENNA IMMEDIATE
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 04254

USICA

FOR FERNANDEZ FROM CLAUSSEN; STATE FOR ACDA:FISCHER

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: "ATLANTIC NEWS" REPORT ON MBFR

1. FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARED IN "ATLANTIC NEWS" DATED
26 APRIL 1978. BEGIN TEXT:

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1. MBFR: EAST'S INITIAL REACTION TO NEW NATO INITIATIVE
GIVES RISE TO SOME HOPE FOR FIRST AGREEMENT.

2. (A.N.-N.A.) - AFTER THE CLOSE OF THE LATEST ROUND OF
"MBFR" NEGOTIATIONS ON FORCE REDUCTION IN CENTRAL EUROPE,
THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL MET ON FRIDAY TO SUM UP ON THE TALKS,
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NATO AD HOC GROUP, IN
VIENNA. AMBASSADORS W. DE VOS VAN STEENWIJK (NETHERLANDS),
STANLEY RESOR (UNITED STATES) AND SAHAP INHAN (TURKEY)
PRESENTED THE 35TH ORAL REPORT ON THE NEGOTIATIONS AND GAVE
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SOME INDICATIONS REGARDING THE EAST'S INITIAL REACTION TO
THE NEW INITIATIVE WHICH NATO SUBMITTED LAST WEEK IN
VIENNA.

3. THE WEST WILL PROBABLY NOT RECEIVE AN OFFICIAL REPLY
FROM THE EAST TO ITS NEW PROPOSALS -- A VARIATION ON ITS
1975 "OPTION-3" PROPOSAL -- BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE

NEXT ROUND OF MBFR IN MID-MAY. HOWEVER, IT IS STATED AT NATO THAT THE COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE MBFR HAVE RECEIVED IT "WITH INTEREST." THE FACT THAT THE NEW INITIATIVE HAS ALREADY BEEN MORE OR LESS "WELL RECEIVED" IS A PARTICULARLY POSITIVE SIGN, CONSIDERING THAT IN THE PAST, THE OTHER WESTERN PROPOSALS WERE RECEIVED WITH A REPLY THAT WAS "VERY MUCH LESS THAN OVERWHELMING" STATES A NATO SOURCE.

4. IF, BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, ONE LOOKS AT THE NUCLEAR PROPOSAL KNOWN AS "OPTION-3," SINCE IT WAS PRESENTED IN DECEMBER 1975, THE EASTERN COUNTRIES HAVE NOT GIVEN ANY CONCRETE REPLY TO THIS ALLIED PROPOSAL. CONSEQUENTLY, NEGOTIATING CIRCLES CONSIDER, IF THE EAST REPLIES IN A FAIRLY CLEAR MANNER TO THE INITIATIVE, IT WILL BE KNOWN WHETHER OR NOT THE EAST DOES IN FACT ENVISAGE A FIRST PHASE AGREEMENT ACCORDING TO THE LINES SKETCHED OUT BY NATO.

5. NOW THAT NATO HAS DEMONSTRATED A SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE AND FLEXIBILITY WITH ITS NEW PROPOSAL, IT IS USEFUL TO RECALL COMMENTS MADE IN THIS CONNECTION BY PRESIDENT CARTER TO THE NATO COUNCIL DURING HIS VISIT TO BRUSSELS IN JANUARY: "WE IN THE ALLIANCE ARE PREPARED TO BE FLEXIBLE IN SEEKING PROGRESS TOWARD A BALANCED OUTCOME THAT PROTECTS OUR INTERESTS. BUT SERIOUS INTEREST IN MOVING THE TALKS FORWARD CANNOT BE ONE-SIDED. WE LOOK FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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AN EQUAL COMMITMENT AND CONTRIBUTION TOWARD PROGRESS IN THE TALKS FROM THE WARSAW PACT STATES."

6. HERE IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE NATO STATEMENT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE "MBFR" NEGOTIATIONS AT THE END OF THE 14TH ROUND, MADE BY AMBASSADOR W. DE VOS VAN STEENWIJK, DUTCH DELEGATE, ON 19 APRIL IN VIENNA:

--"TODAY I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THE STATE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AS SEEN BY WESTERN PARTICIPANTS AT THE END OF THE FOURTEENTH ROUND.

--"WESTERN PARTICIPANTS CONSIDER THIS ROUND TO HAVE BEEN A SIGNIFICANT ONE WITH RESPECT TO AN EVENTUAL AGREEMENT IN THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS.

--"I SAY THIS BECAUSE THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS AT TODAY'S PLENARY SESSION INTRODUCED A MAJOR NEW INITIATIVE INTENDED TO MOVE THE NEGOTIATIONS DECISIVELY TOWARD A FIRST PHASE AGREEMENT.

--"OUR INITIATIVE DEALS WITH TWO MAJOR OPEN ISSUES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

--"THE FIRST OF THESE IS THE ISSUE OF COMMITMENTS ON THE AMOUNT AND TIMING OF PHASE II REDUCTIONS BY DIRECT

PARTICIPANTS.

--"THE SECOND ISSUE IS THE QUESTION OF THE COMPOSITION OF PHASE I SOVIET REDUCTIONS. OWING TO THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THESE TALKS, WE CANNOT GIVE FURTHER DETAILS.

--"THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS HAVE MADE THIS MOVE BECAUSE OF THEIR DEEP INTEREST IN ACHIEVING AN AGREEMENT BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF APPROXIMATE PARITY IN GROUND FORCES AND COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILINGS WHICH WOULD ENHANCE STABILITY AND STRENGTHEN PEACE AND SECURITY IN EUROPE.

--"WHETHER OR NOT THE NEGOTIATIONS NOW ACTUALLY DO ENTER A DECISIVE STATE DEPENDS ON THE RESPONSE WHICH THE EASTERN

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PARTICIPANTS WILL MAKE TO THIS NEW INITIATIVE. WE HAVE EMPHASIZED TO OUR EASTERN COLLEAGUES THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO AN EASTERN RESPONSE WHICH WOULD PERMIT US TO MOVE FORWARD TO AN EARLY PHASE I AGREEMENT.

--"THIS NEGOTIATING ROUND WAS ALSO IMPORTANT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE DATA DISCUSSION. THE PARTICIPANTS AGREED ON THE MODALITIES OF A FURTHER EXCHANGE OF DATA. THEY THEN PROCEEDED TO EXCHANGE THE ADDITIONAL DATA AND HAVE BEGUN A DISCUSSION OF IT.

--"THIS DISCUSSION HAS NOT THUS FAR CLARIFIED THE REASONS FOR THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN WESTERN AND EASTERN FIGURES ON EASTERN MANPOWER IN THE AREA. NEVERTHELESS, A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF ADDITIONAL DATA IS NOW AVAILABLE TO THE

PARTICIPANTS, AND THIS IS MAKING IT POSSIBLE TO CONDUCT THE DISCUSSION ON THIS SUBJECT IN A MORE CONCRETE AND PURPOSEFUL WAY.

--"THE DISCREPANCY MUST, OF COURSE, BE RESOLVED BEFORE THERE CAN BE AGREEMENT ON THE DATA. AGREEMENT ON DATA ON UNCLASSIFIED

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MILITARY MANPOWER IN THE AREA IS ESSENTIAL FOR AN AGREEMENT ON REDUCTIONS AND LIMITATION. WITHOUT SUCH AN AGREEMENT, IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH LIMITATIONS. FOR THIS REASON, OUR NEW INITIATIVE IS CONDITIONAL ON AGREEMENT ON MANPOWER DATA. IT IS NOW MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO WORK IN A PRACTICAL AND BUSINESSLIKE WAY TO DETERMINE THE SOURCES OF THE DISCREPANCY. THE PARTICIPANTS NOW HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES, THE DATA DISCREPANCY MUST BE RESOLVED, OR IT WILL REMAIN AN OBSTACLE TO A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT. --"IN SUM, THIS HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT AND EVENTFUL ROUND. FROM THE WESTERN VIEW POINT, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT WE NOW HAVE A REAL BASIS FOR OVERCOMING THE IMPASSE IN THESE TALKS AND FOR ENTERING THE DECISIVE STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS OF A FIRST AGREEMENT. BUT THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE RESPONSE THE EAST MAKES TO OUR NEW WESTERN PROPOSALS." END TEXT. CLAUSSEN

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